

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND**  
**ACCOUNTABILITY**



*SUBCOMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING:*

***A Citizen's Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act and the  
Privacy Act of 1974 to Request Government Records***

***OPENING STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN TODD RUSSELL PLATTS***

*JUNE 22, 2005*

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The matter before us today is the Committee on Government Reform Report entitled, *A Citizen's Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974 to Request Government Records*.

The House Committee on Government Operations first published this report in 1977, and it has been widely distributed ever since. The current Government Reform Committee has amended and updated this guide every Congress since its formation. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) went into effect on July 4, 1967; the Committee is proud to publish the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of this report as the 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FOIA approaches.

The revisions to the *Citizen's Guide* in the 109th Congress are primarily editorial and do not alter the substantive portions of the report from when it was last published by the Committee in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress on June 23, 2003. These changes include: corrections to U.S. Code references in footnotes to reflect the most recent editions of all cited laws; updates of web addresses pointing to additional reference materials; and updates to the membership roster and other information about the Committee on Government Reform. These technical changes have been agreed to by Ranking Member Ed Towns (D-NY).

The *Citizen's Guide* provides a user-friendly, easy to understand introduction to FOIA and the Privacy Act. The *Citizen's Guide* is not meant to be comprehensive, and it does not attempt to examine the voluminous court decisions surrounding these laws. A user should consult this guide to understand the processes for making a request under these laws. Additional guidance and resources relating to FOIA and Privacy Act requests as published by the Executive Branch and other non-congressional sources are referenced in the *Citizen's Guide's* Appendix.